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Prevention of armed conflict

New Partnership for Africa's Development: progress in implementation and international support: causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa

The rule of law at the national and international levels

Security Council
Sixty-second year

Letter dated 3 May 2007 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Eritrea to the United Nations addressed to the President of the General Assembly

I have the honour to forward a letter addressed to you from Mr. Isaias Afwerki, President of the State of Eritrea, concerning the issue of terrorism and the grave situation in Somalia, which I received today, 3 May 2007 (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would kindly circulate the present letter and its annex as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda items 11, 62 (b) and 80, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Tesfa Alem **Seyoum**
Chargé d'affaires a.i.

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Annex to the letter dated 3 May 2007 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Eritrea to the United Nations addressed to the President of the General Assembly

Let me underline at the outset that my Government has been impelled to harbour strong reservations on the credibility and conduct of the UN Security Council. This emanates from repetitive, unsavory, experiences that it has gleaned in a long time. Notwithstanding this fact, allow me to submit our views and appeals in regard to some critical and timely issues; both for the record, and, for the sake of the respect of the rule of law as well as in fulfillment of our moral duties.

First: on the issue of terrorism and the "war on terror"

The underlying causes and rise of terrorism will doubtless require, even if uncontroversial, more profound appraisal and scrutiny. For reasons of brevity, however, I do not wish to dwell on this aspect of the phenomenon in this brief letter.

For a long time both before and especially after its independence, Eritrea has been tested as a target and victim of terrorism. This assertion is not derived from some abstract or speculative analysis. It is borne out by well-documented facts and events. The relentless struggle we have, and continue to conduct, to combat terrorism is indeed well-known to everybody.

The tragic events of September 11 were critical in heightening international public awareness about the real menace of terrorism. The "war against terror" that was launched in the aftermath of the tragic incident has however drifted with time to assume preoccupying dimensions. In more blunt and candid terms, it would not be an exaggeration to state that "the war on terror has now been derailed".

The fact is many governments and political forces are misconstruing the catch-phrase, in an opportunistic manner and outside its real ambit, to advance their narrow, dominant interests, to flout justice, the rule of law, and, as a convenient tool for fabricating pretexts (as "a means for an end"). These unscrupulous approaches and practices are engendering a spiral of ever-increasing annihilation of populations, disruption of societies, intermittent crises and instability in various regions of our globe. What is ironic is that all these transgressions are being justified in the name of the "war on terror".

Conscientious voices raised against the crimes perpetrated, or the convoluted policies pursued under the rubric of "the war on terror" are invariably undermined and quelled through the logic of deceit and intimidation. The search for appropriate remedies is being frustrated and becoming increasingly elusive.

Unfortunately, the UN Security Council appears to be oblivious to these crimes and transgressions that cannot be masked in any way. Had the Security Council shouldered its legal and moral responsibilities in the world as a whole and in the various sub-regions, the aberrations could have been avoided. Sadly, the Security Council has become hostage to its structural flaws thereby forfeiting its accountability to its international constituency. Rectification has accordingly become a pipe dream.

But the matter did not end there. The resistance of the Somali people to invasion continued fervently. The popular resistance was again dubbed as "terrorism" and war unleashed in Mogadishu and its environs with tanks and artillery causing the death of civilians and dislocation of hundreds of thousands.

All this happened under the watch of the UN Security Council. The atrocities and crimes are being justified as collateral consequences of the "war on terror" and at times, as damages incurred by clan in-fighting. The mendacious campaign to justify invasion and injustices through various bogus pretexts will no doubt continue. But until when?

The deteriorating and dangerous situation in Somalia will not abate in spite of the oft-repeated claims by the invaders that "everything is under control". History and the experiences of the last few years illustrate that force and deceit will not solve what is essentially a political problem. To believe otherwise is mere illusion.

The invasion unleashed against Somalia in the name of the "war on terror" has aggravated the instability of our region in addition to the human toll and destruction that it is inflicting on the Somali people.

To ask "where is the UN Security Council?" may be considered as naivety. As I emphasized before and irrespective of our expectations, we wish to put on record our stance for the sake of justice and the respect of the rule of law and loudly urge the UN Security Council to shoulder its legal and moral responsibilities.

(*Signed*) Isaias **Afwerki**
President
The State of Eritrea